

[Mrs. Betty Piontkowsky]

[?]

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Title Job experience

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Project worker Betty Burke

Project editor

Remarks

W3617 May 18

Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FORM A

Circumstances of Interview [? - ?]

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

490 Words

May 18 [?]

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Betty Burke

ADDRESS 1339 South Troy Street

DATE April 5, 1939

SUBJECT Job Experience

Library of Congress

1. Date and time of interview 4/1 - 4/3 - 4/5 - Evenings 2, afternoon 1.
2. Place of interview 4820 South Elizabeth Street, home of informant
3. Name and address of informant Mrs. Betty Piontkowsky
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

Molly Yampolsky

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

None

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Two story wooden house, stove heat, four families living in sub-divided rooms, 10 rooms in all. Betty and family have 3 rooms in the back first fl. reached by walking through a narrow side passage unpaved, half covered by rotten broken board lengths. Very clean inside. Shares toilet with front family? No bath tub. Probably one family on her block possesses bath. Very rundown frame cottages and flats on the block.

FORM B

Personal History of Informant

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

STATE Illinois

Library of Congress

NAME OF WORKER Betty Burke

ADDRESS 1339 South Troy Street

DATE April 5, 1939

SUBJECT Job Experiences

NAME OF INFORMANT Betty Piontkowski

1. Ancestry American born-Polish parentage
2. Place and date of birth 24 years old - 5208 S. Hermitage -Back of yards.
3. Family Married 6 years - one child 5 - expecting another in May- husband left her twice, for months each time, but is now at home.
4. Places lived in, with dates Back of the yards all her life.
5. Education, with dates Hamlin Grammar School to 8th grade. Enjoyed dramatics in school.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Has been stockyards worker, off and on, and in various departments, since she was 13 years old.
7. Special skills and interests None discoverable, so far.
8. Community and religious activities - Roman Catholic, attends church irregularly, observes all holy days and rites and fasts, etc. Her husband who is Irish, is wholly irreligious. There are bitter quarrels on that account.
9. Description of Informant Haggard as a result of sick pregnancy, but rather appealing in spite of being extremely hard and generally suspicious minded. Can speak Polish well but

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uses English at home. Betty hasn't been outside the yards district for 3 years and doesn't care to go.

10. Other Points gained in interview

Uses obscene language continuously without any inhibitions whatsoever or any offensiveness realized or intended.

FORM C

Text of Interview (unedited)

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Betty Burke

ADDRESS 1339 South Troy Street

DATE April 5, 1939

SUBJECT Job Experiences

NAME OF INFORMANT Betty Piontkowsky

Kid, I always worked at Armour's. Some of them places in the yards ain't worth a s—t. My sister Anna works in one of them two by four joints some cheap Jew owns. Armour's aint so bad, and some departments like the one I work in, they call it the lard refinery, it's pretty clean there. What I do is operate one of these big automatic carton machines. These

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machines are up on a high platform and after I feed the empty carton and wrapper into a machine it comes out on a belt and the carton's packed with lard, and goes down on the floor by belt to the check girls. My machine is fixed for a rate of sixty cartons a minute. We used to stitch the boxes but now there's a great big machine and all them boxes are glued automatically. Say, lots of girls are out on account of that machine doing their work.

They got a new rule now. They won't take no women over thirty. You got to go through a doctor's examination if they lay you off more than sixty days, every time, even if you're an old timer. There was a woman in our department, she was a big, fat woman. We used to call her Mama. She was laid off once and when she came back they wouldn't take her. Miss McCann, she's in charge of hiring all the women, she come out with her ass stuck out and she said,

FORM D

Extra Comment

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

Doesn't want her name used, nor her address. Very fearful that her chance to get back to work will be jeopardized in some way. Hasn't told too much because she's not yet accepted interviewer's visits as wholly without suspicious motives.

STATE Illinois

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SUBJECT Job Experiences

NAME OF INFORMANT Betty Piontkowsky

'Mama, don't you know it's for your own sake we can't take you back. Why you might have a heart attack at work and then the company would be held responsible. You shouldn't be working at this any more.

Say, kid, you shoulda heard Mama. She was so mad! She started yelling and hollering about how she was good enough to work there 4 months ago and how she was only 15 pounds heavier than when they laid her off last. She was a 215 pounder, but there was nothing wrong with her. She was stronger than most of us, like an ox. She didn't have no weak heart. But old piss-in-the-face McCann just didn't want her anymore and she wouldn't take her back. Mama called her every name she knew in Polish, before she went.

I remember when they had them fights in the yards over the Unions. Some of the men got stabbed. Jesus, they had cops all over the place for a long time. It was kind of exciting. But I didn't know what it was all about anyhow. Didn't care to know, either.

I worked in the refinery this last time until I was more than five months gone with what I got. It didn't show so much then. If they knew I was that way they wouldn't let me go to work. I got a bad eye lately 3 too, my luck. My machine needs good eyes else I could get a hand mashed easy. It's a good thing we got 15 minutes morning and afternoon relief. We have half hour lunch. One minute late and we get docked half an hour.